

# Religious framings in media. The “miraculous” healing of Gabriel Cotabiță

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## Abstract

*In Romania there is a great interest in religious rituals and traditions. This interest comes from the public’s behavior and is taken over by media. The religious beliefs are very important. Because the Romanians are a nation which is very fond of the religious traditions and rituals it is normal this thing to be taken over by the journalists as a basis of their subjects.*

*The religious framing presented in the news is applied to a variety of events in order to offer to the audience an explanation for some unusual situations.*

*The terms “miracle” and “wonder” are frequently used by the on-line publications and by the news institutions. This has become obvious to me by observing a subject that held the first page for over three months – Gabriel Cotabiță’s miraculous revival after coma.*

*During his convalescence, dramatic assumptions have been launched, giving him minimal chances of recovery. He has been portrayed as a victim of fate. This information occupied the first page of on-line publications and has determined a broad religious national manifestation. Despite of the speculated tragic scenarios, in June, the artist woke up from the coma and recovered quickly, without any secondary effects. This situation placed him in the position of “object of God’s will, object of a miracle”.*

*This paper analyzes the way media and the audience have approached and framed the event and aims to identify the symbolic representations assigned to the event in the on-line press and on-line communities. The research is supported by the media anthropology studies, by the analysis of religious ideology presented in specialized encyclopedias and by the framing theory.*

*This research finds its originality in the fact that analyses a religious manifestation determined by the framing offered by the media to the event.*

*The aim is to understand more deeply the connection between the media discourse and the audience’s behavior.*

*The methodology of the paper is focused on the analysis of two levels: 1) the way media treated and framed the event through articles posted by the online publications: Gandul.ro, Adevarul.ro, stirileprotv.ro, a1.ro, Libertatea.ro, Romaniatv.ro. 2) the way the audience perceived the subject, revealed by comments on the selected articles, comments on Gabriel Cotabiță’s Facebook page and opinions shared on the Facebook event “Ne.rugam.pentru.Gabriel.Cotabiță”. The thematic analysis helped me to identify the way media and the audience built the verdict of miracle associated to Gabriel Cotabiță’s unexplainable recovery and revealed a scenario used by these two categories in the construction of their messages. The media event took place according to some stages which correspond to the stages of accomplishing a miracle. The main elements were the ritualistic behavior followed by a healing which ca not be rationally explained.*

*The research showed that at the moment, Gabriel Cotabiță is considered to be a symbol of God’s mercy. He is identified as the object of a miracle and his experience, due to the story created by the media, has set a certain way of interpreting the events which are similar to it. People’s faith has been confirmed or reinforced. However, Gabriel Cotabiță is not perceived as an emissary of divinity to the world. Although this potential exists, it was not exploited.*

## Keywords

*Miracle, victim, prayer, framing, ritual, media, public.*

## Résumé

*Les Roumains sont très intéressés par les rituels et traditions religieuses. Cet intérêt caractérise le comportement du public et il est pris par les médias.*

*Les croyances religieuses sont très importantes en Roumanie. Parce que les roumains sont un peuple très attaché aux coutumes et rituels religieux, il est normal que cet intérêt soit traduit dans les sujets abordés par les institutions médiatiques.*

*Les cadres religieux présentés dans les nouvelles locales sont appliqués dans une multitude de situations pour donner au public une explication pour des événements inhabituels.*

*Les termes „miracle” et „merveille” sont souvent utilisés par les publications en ligne et les institutions de presse. Cela est devenu évident pour moi dans la période où j’ai remarqué un sujet qui a pris les premières pages des publications médiatiques en Roumanie pendant trois mois – la guérison „miraculeuse” de Gabriel Cotabiță après un coma.*

*Pendant sa convalescence, ont été lancées des hypothèses dramatiques sur son état de santé. Ces hypothèses ont lui donné des chances minimales de récupération. Il a été décrit comme une victime du destin. Ces informations ont occupé beaucoup d’espace dans les publications en ligne et ont conduit à une grande manifestation religieuse à l’échelle nationale. Malgré les scènes tragiques spéculées, en juin, l’artiste s’est réveillé dans le coma et il a récupéré rapidement, sans rencontrer de difficultés ou d’effets secondaires. Cette situation a placé Gabriel Cotabiță dans la position „d’émissaire de la volonté divine” ou „objet d’un miracle”.*

*Cet article examine comment les médias et le public ont approché et classé l’événement et vise à identifier les représentations symboliques attribuées au sujet dans les médias en ligne et les communautés en ligne. Cette analyse se fonde sur des études d’anthropologie des médias, sur l’analyse des idéologies religieuses présentées dans des encyclopédies spécialisées et sur la théorie du cadrage.*

*L’originalité de cette recherche est due au fait qu’elle analyse une grande manifestation religieuse à l’échelle nationale, déterminé par le cadre donné à l’événement par média. Le but est de comprendre en profondeur la relation entre le discours des médias et le comportement du public.*

*La méthodologie de recherche se concentre sur deux niveaux: 1) comment les médias ont approché et encadré l’affaire dans les articles publiés par des publications en ligne: Gândul, Adevărul, Evenimentul zilei, Libertatea, Stirileprotv.ro, A1.ro, Romaniatv.ro. 2) comment le public a perçu le sujet, révélé par des commentaires sur des articles sélectionnés,*

*commentaires sur la page de Facebook de l’artiste et les opinions qu’ils ont partagé dans le groupe Facebook „Ne.rugam.pentru.Gabriel.Cotabiță”. L’analyse thématique m’a aidé à identifier comment les médias et le public ont construit le verdict “miracle” associé à la guérison de Gabriel Cotabiță et m’a révélé un script utilisé par les deux catégories dans la construction de leurs messages. L’événement médiatique s’est déroulé par quelques étapes qui correspondent aux étapes d’un miracle. Les principaux éléments étaient le comportement rituel suivi d’une guérison qui ne peut pas être rationnellement expliqué.*

*Ma recherche a montré que pour le moment, Gabriel Cotabiță est considéré comme un symbole de la grâce de Dieu. Il est perçu comme l’objet d’un miracle et l’expérience qu’il a passée a fourni un cadre pour interpréter des futurs événements du même type, en raison de l’histoire construite des médias. La foi des gens en Dieu a été confirmée ou renforcée. Mais, toutefois, Gabriel Cotabiță n’est pas perçu comme un émissaire de la divinité dans le monde. Bien que ce potentiel existe, jusqu’à maintenant il n’a pas été exploité.*

### **Mots-clés**

*Miracle, merveille, victime, prière, rituel, média, encadrement, public.*

### **Introduction**

In Romania, the religious beliefs are a very important subject. The Romanians are a nation very fond of spiritual habits and rituals and this thing is also observable in the way media builds its subjects. Usually, the religious themes approached by the Romanian news institutions refer to the religious celebrations, to the pilgrimages performed for these occasions, to the traditions. But, the religious symbolic is extended to a variety of situations with the purpose of giving meaning or explaining the causes of some unusual phenomena.

Obviously, the religious perceptions represent a very strong trigger for the society, making the public sensitive to this kind of approaches. Because Romanians are 86% Orthodox, it is normal that a part of the public to empathize, to react and to be interested in subjects that are linked to the Christian symbols.

From personal observations, I have reached the conclusion that the terms “miracles”, “miraculous”, “wonder” are used very often by the online publications and news institutions.

This thing has become obvious to me while observing a certain media subject which took place for three months – Gabriel Cotabiță’s coma, succeeded by his spectacular healing.

That is the reason my paper is based on the research of a distinct subject within the religious approach in media. I have chosen to investigate the concept of healing treated in occult terms, more specific- the miraculous healing.

My research has started from Gabriel Cotabiță’s case. He regained the appreciation of the public after an experience closed to death and at the moment he is considered to be the subject of a miracle. I was surprised to see the frequency of the religious terms within the titles of the articles, but also the amplitude of a phenomenon that went national and led to a series of religious terms and actions.

Thus, I have decided to investigate in detail how the media has framed the case and how was built the concept of “miraculous healing”, associated to Gabriel Cotabiță’s case. Also, I want to identify the frames built by the public and to piece together the image of this artist as a result of the experience he went through.

The main reason I was interested in this subject was the easiness with which the journalists used the words “miracle” and “wonder” during the event and how fast a complex praying ritual was perpetuated among the public.

Secondly, I have decided to concentrate upon this subject because no one has treated it until now. I believe that my research will reveal some important characteristics of the way Romanian mass-media functions. Although, there are authors that have analyzed the way miracles are perceived by the modern society or have concentrated their studies on how the supernatural actions are produced or even the morning ritual practiced by the fans of the celebrities, there are no researches upon the way in which the Romanian society treated the case of Gabriel Cotabiță. It is a new subject which produced important effects in media. That is why I think my research could underline some interesting details regarding the interconnection between media and the public opinion’s preferences.

My research will include more sections.

First of all, I will analyze the articles and the way the publications selected by me have presented the starting point of the event in which Gabriel Cotabiță was the main actor.

In the second section, I will analyze the reactions of the public, classifying them on three levels: the starting point of the event, the going of the event and the recovery of the artist.

In the end, I will make a connection between the two sections and I will try to put the pieces together and identify the manner in which Gabriel Cotabiță gained the status of subject of a miracle.

Basing on this, I will try to discover if it is a standard frame using both by the media and the public when it comes to this kind of subjects.

My paper aims to find out if and to what degree Gabriel Cotabiță’s case is perceived by the public as a divine intervention and if the artist is now considered to be an emissary of God’s will. This objective will guide me in identifying the manner media and the public built the concept of “miraculous healing.

Another objective is to discover if it is a common frame used by the public and the media when it comes to cases with mystical potential.

**METHOD** – In order to fulfill my objectives, I have used the thematic analysis. I think that this method is the most relevant for my research because as Uwe Flick says, it helps the researcher to identify a pattern of meanings within a data set (apud Braun, Clark, 2014, p. 421). Another motivation for choosing the thematic analysis was the fact that it is based on developing some codes after reading a text. This codes are divided in: “semantic codes” (meanings coming across from the verbal statements) and latent codes (hidden meanings) (ibidem, p. 422). I will analyze the reactions of the public and the media approach in order to discover the meanings that transcend from their statements.

My analysis will unfold on two levels: the approach of the journalists and media institutions and the opinion of the public regarding the subject.

**CORPUS** – Because of the fact that my resources are limited and the space of analysis is also limited, my research does not pretend to be exhaustive or absolutely true, but I will try to identify the most relevant sources for the subject I have chosen to study and I will try to analyze the phenomenon as accurate as I can. For technical reasons I have chosen to concentrate my study upon the online medium. Therefore, I have selected seven online publications

that I thought to be the most relevant for the theme: Gândul, Adevărul, Evenimentul zilei, Libertatea, Stirileprotv.ro, A1.ro, Romaniatv.ro. I divided them into two categories according to their specific: the “qualitative” ones-that are known for their objectivity and for their seriousness as Gândul, Evenimentul zilei, Adevărul, Stirileprotv.ro and the ones which, over time, stood out for the fact that they highlighted the spectacular elements in every case in order to attract the public’s attention (Libertatea, a1.ro, Romaniatv.ro). I have taken into consideration the content posted between May and September 2015.

At the first level I have analyzed the articles posted by these publication regarding Gabriel Cotabiță’s topic to discover the way mass-media approached the case and built the “miraculous” frame.

At the second level, in order to identify the public’s perception and the framing created by the public, I have taken into consideration the comments posted by the audience to the articles I mentioned earlier. I have also analyzed the opinions expressed by the public within certain Facebook groups dedicated to the event and within Gabriel Cotabiță’s official Facebook page.

### The miraculous healing of Gabriel Cotabiță

Before presenting my research, I will define the term “miracle” which is the main concept of the entire topic.

According to DEX online, the miracle is “a supernatural phenomenon, a wonder; an amazing, extraordinary fact”. (<https://dexonline.ro/definitie/miracol>)

In the book *Encyclopedia of religion, communication and media*, edited by Daniel A. Stout “Miracles are extraordinary events that witnesses attribute to supernatural causes. These events or actions are so extraordinary that they appear not to have a rational or scientific explanation; therefore witnesses claim them as evidence of the divine acting in nature or through an individual.” (Hutchinson, 2006, p. 260). The same author says that Christianity recognizes certain facts as miracles. One of the most important miracles is the healing (especially of chronic diseases) as a result of intense prayer. (ibidem, p. 262)

The Christianity is built around the concept of miracle. The first example mentioned by the history of religion is Moses’s. According to Dawn L.

Hutchinson, the Old Testament relates the miracles performed in order to release the Israelites from Egypt: “transformation of matter”, “changing water into blood”, splitting the Red Sea. But, the most important miracles known by the Christians are the ones performed by Jesus Christ, culminating with His revival from death – considered to be the ultimate sacrifice. The healings performed by Jesus have a thing in common: they followed an intense prayer ritual and in every case, the healed person had been assured that his faith healed him. (ibidem, p. 261-262)

In my opinion, mass-media exploits the public’s tendency to be attracted by things that are out of the ordinary and offer them an escape from the daily normal. Whether we are talking about a person who truly believes in spirituality and by learning this information validates his own beliefs and convictions, whether we bring into discussion the more pragmatic and analytical individuals who read the articles in order to pass the information through the personal filter or to try to provide logical explanations, for certain if a title contains the term „miracle” it will attract the reader’s attention.

The media approach of the Gabriel Cotabiță’s case was achieved in stages. I have identified three levels of approach:

#### • CREATING THE PREMISES OF A MIRACLE

\* The meaning of the extracts selected by me from the articles can be distorted to a certain degree due to the translation from Romanian into English.

#### First level – “The dramatic situation, minimal chances of recovery”

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2015, the day the event produced, **a1.ro** announced within an article posted on its web page: “Gabriel Cotabiță fights for his life at Floreasca Hospital, after he suffered today, at noon, a cardiopulmonary arrest while he was at the gym... The news according to which his life hangs from a thread shocked everybody.” (<https://goo.gl/xGwSCd>)

By choosing to express in this way, it is induced to the public that Gabriel Cotabiță’s life is in great danger, his chances of survival being, obviously, lower than the chances of living.

Libertatea, on the other hand, haven’t rushed to speculate the extraordinary potential of the news, thus their title was:

“The drastic diets have broken his heart! Gabriel Cotabiță pays the price of celebrity.” (<https://goo.gl/rABFsK>)

In the same day, Gândul, Adevărul and stirileprotv.ro approached the topic in a more pragmatic manner, describing the situation in medical terms:

- Gândul: “Gabriel Cotabiță suffered from a cardiopulmonary arrest at the gym. The singer has been resuscitated for 7 minutes.” (<https://goo.gl/viwwKz>)

- Adevărul: “Gabriel Cotabiță was found unconscious in a hotel. The singer which suffered from a cardiopulmonary arrest is now intubated and artificially ventilated at Floreasca Hospital.” (<https://goo.gl/k2ZX8X>)

- Stirileprotv.ro: “Gabriel Cotabiță is in serious condition after he suffered from a cardiopulmonary arrest. The artist was the subject of a angiography.” (<https://goo.gl/zf9vNh>) and the content of the articles included these phrases:

- Gândul: “The singer Gabriel Cotabiță is now hospitalized in serious condition at Floreasca Hospital, after he suffered Friday from a cardiopulmonary arrest... The singer Gabriel Cotabiță was the subject of a angiography. The results say that the artist has no coronary damages, leaving doctors to investigate his brain activity” (<https://goo.gl/viwwKz>)

- Adevărul: “The singer Gabriel Cotabiță was found unconscious on Friday in a hotel from Bucharest, being transported by a SMURD team to the Floreasca Hospital, after being resuscitated and stabilized. Now, Gabriel Cotabiță is intubated and is able to breathe by machines.” (<https://goo.gl/k2ZX8X>)

- Stirileprotv.ro – “Gabriel Cotabiță was at Hilton Hotel gym when he got sick. The singer was found after he suffered from a cardiopulmonary arrest and has been resuscitated... for 20 minutes. His heart started to function and the patient was transported to the hospital in the shortest time.” (<https://goo.gl/zf9vNh>)

The news had an important impact on the audience because all the media channels presented it. Although, the most publications treated the subject in medical terms, due to the fact that some of them used an alarming tone of voice or dramatic expressions, the general impression was that the situation of the Gabriel Cotabiță is a tragic one.

In the articles that related the Gabriel Cotabiță's condition during his hospitalization, his medical situation was presented by most publications as being

very deteriorated and dramatic. By using certain phrases with negative connotations or by placing some specialized medical terms that are not familiar to the public, it is induced the fact that Gabriel Cotabiță has minimal chances of survival. Consciously or not, this is the first step in building the verdict of miracle. It is possible that mass-media had not initially anticipated the event's religious spread, but wanted to present the information as a breaking news to attract the attention of more persons.

During the singer's hospitalization, May-July 2015, the subject occupied an important space within the news grid, all the media channels making constant updates on the topic. The case of Gabriel Cotabiță has been presented daily by media and this fact obviously created an impression to the audience, making the people think that this event is of great importance. In other words, it became a media event. I use the term „media event” due to the description of this phenomenon taken by Mihai Coman from Dayan and Katz within the book “Mass-media. Mit si ritual.” (2003, p. 59-75). The publications Gândul and Adevărul mostly kept a pragmatic perspective, building their articles on the medical terms description of the artist's situation. However, occasionally they have included in their articles sensational elements, subtly suggesting that Gabriel Cotabiță is in a critical condition:

- Gândul: „Gabriel Cotabiță's condition is still a worrisome problem. The artist is in serious, but stable condition. The chances for him to wake up and be normal again are minimal.” (<https://goo.gl/6khMyP>)

“The singer Gabriel Cotabiță has been in coma for two weeks now at Floreasca Hospital and the doctors are reluctant regarding his survival chances.” (<https://goo.gl/27Riio>)

- “The doctors 'official diagnostic: Cotabiță suffered from a cardio pulmonary arrest.” (<https://goo.gl/qAqCwC>)

Adevărul also used mostly medical terms to narrate the topic, but by the use of some expressions as “serious brain damages”, “the singer's situation is still a worrisome problem”, “brain-dead” created the impression of a tragic situation with all the chances to end up in a dramatic way. The gravity of the event was also induced through the expression “Gabriel Cotabiță's life hangs on a thread”. Although this expression is unique in their articles, it is possible that it had a major impact on the audience.

Even though the most articles are written using medical terms, they have dramatic connotations

because they evoke a highly disturbed medical condition. This, alongside the fact that many of those who receive the information are not familiar with the meaning of those specialized medical terms, amplifies the tragic perception of the event.

- Adevărul: “Gabriel Cotabiță in coma. Doctors: The singer suffered a cardiopulmonary arrest due to a severe heart rhythm disorder.” (<https://goo.gl/sCjhEU>)

“Gabriel Cotabiță was subject of a brain MRI which indicated severe brain injuries areas.” (<https://goo.gl/aGggLj>)

“Gabriel Cotabiță’s life hangs on a thread after he suffered a cardiopulmonary arrest...” (<https://goo.gl/FjrxqA>)

“Gabriel Cotabiță is in brain death...” (<https://goo.gl/cAivAL>)

“The singer is still artificially ventilated; his condition is still critical, but stable...” (<https://goo.gl/xBK16Q>)

Libertatea, on the other hand, exploited the dramatic character of the situation within its articles. During the event, they used expression as:

“The dark foresight of an astrologist about Gabriel Cotabiță: “The destiny prepares him the path to Heaven”. (<https://goo.gl/dFfa4p>)

“The doctors’ verdict for Gabriel Cotabiță’s case is horrifying. “If he survives, he won’t be the same” (<https://goo.gl/b5NTDx>)

“Gabriel Cotabiță has been in coma for 10 days and the family hopes for Divine help.” (<https://goo.gl/PpbW4J>)

“Gabriel Cotabiță’s condition is still serious. The artist is in serious, but stable condition. The chances for him to wake up and be normal again are minimal.” (<https://goo.gl/b5NTDx>)

“Gabriel Cotabiță who is in recovery at Elias Hospital after he suffered from a cardio pulmonary arrest was transported again to the Floreasca Hospital. The doctors will mount him an internal defibrillator.” (<https://goo.gl/9tX2CC>)

Libertatea, known for the fact it speculates the sensational out of every news, magnified the dramatic character of the event. The proof is in the tragic expressions used within the titles of the articles: “minimal chances”, “dark foresight”, “creeps on the spine”. An important thing to mention is that Libertatea is the only publication that explicitly used the words “miracle” and “Divine help” during this period.

A1 had a similar approach, presenting the case through these expressions:

“Last-minute information about Gabriel Cotabiță! What’s happening to the artist as we speak” (<https://goo.gl/uhE4w6>)

“The announcement has been made! Gabriel Cotabiță in critical condition: “The intervention was late and the damages are very serious.” (<https://goo.gl/C57NN3>)

“...Being hospitalized at Floreasca Hospital in the intensive care unit, the artist is fighting for his life, but the chances of recovery are minimal.” (<https://goo.gl/4zDqaU>)

Within A 1’s articles, the gravity of Gabriel Cotabiță’s medical condition was amplified through the use of dramatic terms. The readers were encouraged to feel pity for him and as a result they became more emotionally involved in the story.

Stirileprotv.ro, on the other hand, has chosen a heedful approach, avoiding the alarming expressions and trying to present the problem in a scientific, void of occult terms way. They only presented the case basing on the information received from medical sources and tried to avoid the tragic speculations. Although, in their articles are find expressions such as: “critical condition”, these phrases do not generate the same reaction as in the case of the other publications, because they are integrated in a pragmatic context.

Stirileprotv: “Gabriel Cotabiță has poor reflexes. This thing confirms the existence of brainwaves” (<https://goo.gl/a6FY4V>)

“Gabriel Cotabiță is still in serious, but stable condition. Friends have sent supporting messages to the family.” (<https://goo.gl/RzsvXN>)

These articles represent the premises of the “miracle” projected by mass-media in Gabriel Cotabiță’s case. The first condition to be met in order to speak about a miracle is that the person to be placed in a critical situation from which he can not escape without the help of God. By the way these publications chose to publicly expose the artist’s medical condition, they actually created a good context for a wide religious ritualistic manifestation to take place. It is possible that the way this phenomenon evolved had not been anticipated by the journalists, but they have exploited the audience’s predisposition to be attracted in esoteric topics.

Some expressions as “times goes by in its detriment”, “we don’t know what are his chances”,

“Gabriel Cotabiță’s life hangs by a thread”, “Gabriel Cotabiță has brain injuries that are hard to identify.”, “his brain is affected” are used within these articles to reproduce the situation’s drama. Even though it is not explicitly used the word “death”, the metaphors and the comparisons used in the articles’ content are very tough and suggest an unfortunate ending. I think that suggesting the concept of “death” in this case led to an intense emotional reaction because, as Scott K Radford and Peter Bloch say in the article *Grief, commiseration, and consumption following the death of a celebrity* published in *Journal of Consumer Culture* that „death is something unknowable and inherently fascinating.” (2012, p. 141)

### **Second level – “Only a miracle could save him”**

In the second phase, the focus was placed on the emotional side of each person and the audience were encouraged to pray for a miracle.

At this level, it is clear that the tendency to frame the case in the mystical sphere and to define the concept of “miracle” existed. As a result of the public’s growing interest in the articles written on this topic, mass-media has identified the religious potential and speculated the ending of this story. The verdict of miracle was built due to the fact that in this stage were used word such as “prayer”, which clearly express a religious concept. This words represent an essential require to speak about a miracle and they give a clue to the denouement of the event.

The journalists also used a small trick to protect their so-called impartiality. They presented the declarations of some celebrities and their call for prayer. The impersonal expressions such as: “this is the collective prayer dedicated to Gabriel Cotabiță”, Antonia’s statement – “I pray for you...”, “thousands of people prayed for the artist”, “the relatives pray to God for a miracle” describe a religious concept, but elude the authors’ subjectivity because it assign the religious behaviors to other persons cited.

The journalists’ initiative was amplified by the reactions of certain celebrities and of the public. These people initiated collective prayer rituals, aiming the healing of Gabriel Cotabiță. This idea is proved by a series of events.

Libertatea reported how thousands of people prayed for Gabriel Cotabiță within the festival “Flori

de mai”, under the guidance of another Romanian artist, Bodo. (<https://goo.gl/E5P9md>)

Libertatea also presented the declarations of some Romanian celebrities who had encouraged the audience to pray for a miracle. Adrian Minune said: “I wish him a miracle. A real one... Only God will decide.” (<https://goo.gl/JYSnVg>)

Angela Similea: “He needs our support, our collective prayer, no matter where we are. This is why, my friends, I ask you to pray together for Gabi’s healing; to send him a positive, healing energy...”. (<https://goo.gl/ShSBqA>)

Romaniatv cites another artist, Adrian Daminescu who said: “I will wait for you at 10 p.m to join me in HOLLY PRAYER for our brother Gabriel Emil Cotabiță, as we have been doing for a week. We will pray until Gabi will come back among us...”. (<https://goo.gl/77RBWu>)

In the same article, Romaniatv also cites Corina Chiriac’s declaration. She said that she has prayed to Jesus for Gabriel Cotabiță’s recovery and she explicitly used the expression “God bless!”.

Stirileprotv.ro also cited some celebrities who used religious expressions to describe Gabriel Cotabiță’s condition (<https://goo.gl/BvJqKD>):

- Adrian Daminescu: “Some people don’t know how powerful positive thinking and intense prayer are.”

- Antonia: “Gabi, I wish you health! I know you will be all right! I pray for you and I love you!

- Mihai Bendeac: “...I ask you again: optimism. This is the only way a miracle can produce. Be human, not hyenas! It is possible! He is ALIVE! You will be announced if and when he will be needing grave-diggers and mourners. I think this won’t happen soon.”

Evenimentul zilei wrote that the first collective prayer for Gabriel Cotabiță took place at 23:15. It also presented Rita Muresan’s statement: “It is not important where you are. You can be part of it from wherever you are. It is important to respect some rules: you need to stop in the same time with the group and pray for the one who needs energy. This was the case of Gabriel Cotabiță!” (<https://goo.gl/F75Zc1>)

All these public declarations, taken over by the media confirmed that Gabriel Cotabiță is in a critical condition. They also contributed to the perception according to which the science does not have the desired effect and suggested that the only salvation

could come from a supernatural force. Thus, it was created a prayer ritual which quickly spread within the public space. In this way, the second condition needed to perform a miracle has been met. For a miracle to happen, it is absolutely necessary that people ask the help from the Divine to solve the problem (that I mentioned earlier as the first condition for a miracle to happen).

Also, many publications confirmed the fact that the priest daily officiated religious services at the hospital's chapel, praying for Gabriel's healing. This information was presented by Gândul and Libertatea which cited the priest. Stirileprotv.ro published an article under this title: "Gabriel Cotabiță's daughters invited the priest to come at the hospital. "He red to him from the Bible and then he received the Eucharist." (<https://goo.gl/fSfKPi>)

After all those information, the spirituality of the event has become more intense due to the fact that the Christians think that the priests' prayers have a greater power. These articles have also influenced the rituals performed by the audience and determined a more intense spiritual and emotional involvement.

### The third level – "He has risen from the dead"

Once these premises have been met, the last condition needed for a miracle to produce is the healing of the main character. When this thing happened and Gabriel Cotabiță woke up from the coma, both media and the audience who have been involved in this case assigned the case to God. The revival of Gabriel Cotabiță from a coma symbolized the confirmation of a miraculous nature of this event and led to framing the case in the mystical sphere. This happened because it followed an intense prayer. My opinion bases on Dawn L Hutchinson's arguments. In the book *Encyclopedia of religion, communication and media* edited by Daniel A. Stout, he says that "the healing on chronical or terminal diseases is considered to be miraculous and is assign to the power of prayer. Healing, particularly in the case of chronic or terminal diseases, is often considered to be miraculous and is usually attributed to the power of prayer." (2006, p. 262)

The public space was invaded by this idea and everybody said that the healing of Gabriel Cotabiță was God's answer to the collective prayers. It was used the phrase "he has risen from the dead like

Lazarus". To prove my affirmation, I will present the way media narrated the revival of Gabriel Cotabiță within their articles:

- Evenimentul zilei: „The miracle Cotabiță! The artist does things no one expected to do” (<https://goo.gl/DhLtwK>)

- Libertatea: "...he managed to overcome the disease in a miraculous way. Cotabiță recounted the amazing experience happened to him while he was in coma, fighting between life and death.” (<https://goo.gl/4zpTtP>)

„After he defeated death after a month of coma, Gabriel Cotabiță seems to be reborn.” (<https://goo.gl/JWwHUD>)

“He miraculously returned to life and now is almost healed” (<https://goo.gl/1scS2B>)

- A1.ro:

“The truth about the miraculous revival of Gabriel Cotabiță.” (<https://goo.gl/am2BjM>)

“The wonders do exist and the proof is Gabriel Cotabiță! When his chances were minimal, the artist miraculously recovered.” (<https://goo.gl/LsWufQ>)

“...all this time, thousands of people prayed for Gabriel Cotabiță and the miracle happened!” (<https://goo.gl/n7tGF4>)

- Evenimentul zilei:

“God returned Gabriel Cotabiță back to fix the things he failed in life” (<https://goo.gl/2oiZEa>)

The only publication that kept a pragmatic approach even after Gabriel Cotabiță's revival was Stirileprotv.ro:

- “Gabriel Cotabiță has been discharged from the hospital... After two terrible months, Gabriel Cotabiță has returned home. The doctors from Elias Hospital discharged him and say that his condition is already better due to the 27 days of recovery.” (<https://goo.gl/73iskc>)

It is noticeable that the terms “miracle”, “miraculous” and “wonder” are present in most of these articles, suggesting that the healing has supernatural causes.

From my observations, the only publications that have been consistent in describing Gabriel Cotabiță's healing in terms of “miracle” and “wonder” are Libertatea and a1.ro.

The same based on religious terms approach could be observed in some celebrities' statements. Loredana Groza publicly said that: “He is a symbol, a legend. He is a man who has seen death and had risen from the dead like Lazarus... for me it is a miraculous thing

to sing and to get over all the obstacles your mind and body impose to you.” (<https://goo.gl/YLJx77>)

Cristian Brancu also compared the revival of Gabriel Cotabiță with the biblical case of Lazarus: “...Gabriel Cotabiță has transformed into Lazarus ...” (<https://goo.gl/fYvy5V>)

In this way, the case gets a new religious dimension through the analogy with the biblical story of Lazarus’s resurrection. From this moment, all the premises of a miracle were met and this association with Lazarus represented a conclusion and a verdict. Gabriel Cotabiță’s healing was from that moment on considered to be a “miracle”.

The impact of the articles using the words “miracle” and “wonder” was amplified and sustained by Gabriel Cotabiță’s declarations after the event. Although he has not used these words, he has sustained this perception by narrating the extra-sensory experiences he has been through and presenting the mission he has received from the supernatural entities he has met.

Within his interviews he said he has been “on the other side and the way back was very difficult”. He has met “different entities” and a voice told him he will return among the living. These entities also encouraged him to change his whole life, to do many good things and gave him a message to send to the others (to be brave and to know that nothing bad happens when you die). Gabriel Cotabiță also told to Simona Gherghie within an interview (<https://goo.gl/VDAAmu>) that the people who have prayed for him “brought him back”.

It is clear from these statements that Gabriel Cotabiță believes he has been healed with the help of God, due to the collective prayers.

So, Gabriel Cotabiță is perceived not only as a proof that miracles do exist, but also as an emissary of God’s will who has to transmit a message to other people.

In my opinion, the association between Gabriel Cotabiță and the terms “miracle”, “risen from the dead” is also a psychological fact. It is also due to the people’s need to believe that miracles can happen. By receiving an example, the people strengthen their conviction according to which God exists. This thing offers them a mental comfort and proves them that there is still hope for everybody.

The people who have been actively involved in the prayer ritual dedicated to the artist’s recovery and the ones who have been emotionally involved in this case

hoped for a happy ending. Through the created context, their expectations have been met and this thing confirmed and strengthen their faith. Another possible implication of formulating the concept “miracle” was that the existence of God was revealed and confirmed to them, offering them the hope of a Divine help. Considering that Romanians are a nation that is very fond of the religious traditions and practices, this kind of information determined a great interest on this topic, making the journalists to frame the event as a miracle, using explicitly the word “miracle” within the articles’ titles.

After all these events happened, the way Gabriel Cotabiță is perceived and treated in the public space has completely changed. When he appears on a television set, everybody gives him applause and some people even “worship” him as an object of God’s will.

These stages, so clearly delimited have encouraged the religious framing. These stages led to a better assimilation of the information by the public and offered time to the readers to reach a certain degree of emotional involvement. I also believe that the fact the suspense was gradually created, had a major influence on the “miracle” frame and on the religious manifestations. The amplitude given by the public and by the media to this event and implicitly to Gabriel Cotabiță comes probably from the status of the artists in our society. The artists, no matter what area are they performing in (painting, dance, music) are considered to be “special” human beings with exceptional abilities. Thereby, the most people think that the artists are part of a special category of people. It is possible that this thing had an influence upon the way press and public have treated the case.

My statement is sustained by Scott K Radford and Peter H Bloch’s opinions that say within their article published in *Journal of Consumer Culture* that: “Since ancient times, persons associated with royalty, military success, or religion have become targets of devotion and veneration. The statues of Egyptian pharaohs and the presidential figures on Mount Rushmore attest to this history of individual celebration. In modern society, the focus of this idolization has moved to mass media celebrities.” (2012, p. 138)

Being inspired from Michael Shudson’s affirmations presented in Eric Rothenbuhler and Mihai Coman’s book, *Media anthropology*, who says that the duty of a journalist is to create „a story” which

the audience or a reader will perceive according as a relationship between facts (2005, p. 121) I drew the next conclusion: The way media treated the subject resembles a story or a series with many episodes:

The introduction is represented by the articles which announced the incident.

The course of the action includes many articles that related Gabriel Cotabiță's medical evolution during the coma.

The plot is based on the controversies determined by some celebrities' statements and by the "disrespectful" acts against the protagonist – Radu Banciu's comments which were considered to be a blasphemy and the behavior of the nurse who took a picture beneath him on his hospital bed.

The climax of the story can be identified with the articles according to which Gabriel has no hope and therefore he will be disconnected from the medical devices. This part of the story also included the call for prayer.

At last, the denouement- Gabriel Cotabiță waking up from the coma- attracted the specific formulation of the word "miracle" and the naming of Gabriel Cotabiță as an emissary of the Divine will, the chosen one.

All the publication that presented this case, especially the ones I have analyzed within this research have contributed significantly to the formulation of the verdict "miracle". Even though the approaches were different, the general message perceived by the public opinion, as a whole, had favored this framing. In my opinion, the multitude of the online articles referring to Gabriel Cotabiță's situation created confusion regarding the source of certain information. The people received and were sensitive to some stimulus and key-words which they have taken over and passed by without associating them to one publication in particular.

The approaches used from the media channels on Gabriel Cotabiță's topic divide those publications in three categories:

- the ones that avoided the "spiritual" expressions and used mostly scientific information, as [stirileprotv.ro](http://stirileprotv.ro);
- the ones that, since the beginning of the event, have constantly used a language dominated by the idea that Gabriel Cotabiță had no chances of recovery as [a1.ro](http://a1.ro);
- the publications that combined these two approaches – initially they have transmitted the

message per se, including medical concepts in order to inform, but then they took advantage of the emotional potential of the subject and explicitly formulated religious terms and supernatural like comparisons – **Gândul, Adevărul, Libertatea**.

### The audience's approach

As for the influence upon the public, **Gândul, Adevărul** and **Evenimentul zilei** had an advantage- they offered to their audience the possibility of sharing their opinions on the articles. Therefore, in my opinion, the active audience watched the topic especially through those publications because this way they could form impressions by interacting with other persons. This speculation is sustained by the fact that during the event I have constantly met some readers which have expressed their opinions on the pages of the publications I mentioned earlier.

On [a1.ro](http://a1.ro) and **Libertatea** the comments section is disabled and this stops me from drawing a conclusion regarding the audience's reactions on the articles posted within these pages.

I have split the audience's comments into 8 categories according to their specific and the content. Thus, there are:

- critics

The critical remarks were based on the debate of several topics. Some people criticized Gabriel Cotabiță for his negligence, other people criticized the way media had approached the topic and others made comments about the Romanian medical system or about the way other persons chose to express their opinion.

- comments disapproving the context the event took place in

There were people who have disapproved the circumstances in which the event took place When he suffered the cardiopulmonary arrest, the artist was in the gym. Considering that Gabriel Cotabiță is 61 years old, the society thinks this activity is not proper for his age. This is why, some of the people who have commented the articles said that the event happened from his fault, due to the overuse.

- ironic comments

These comments are also a result of the context the event took place in. The fact that he was going to the gym, alongside the fact that he has a girlfriend (who became his wife) almost 30 years younger than him and that the incident happened in a hotel left room for

a lot of speculations. Thus, some people assigned Gabriel Cotabiță's medical condition to some sexual causes, accusing him of taking special pills to deal with the „age problems”.

- pragmatic comments

Mostly, this kind of comments belong to the people who sustained that God has nothing to do with Gabriel Cotabiță's recovery and that the experience of the doctors who took care of him is the one who made a difference. There were also voices who said that the event was part of a marketing strategy meant to make Gabriel Cotabiță famous again.

- comments including a religious symbolism

Both during the coma and after Gabriel Cotabiță's revival, there were people who used religious expressions in their comments. Initially, the comments were formulated as an encouragement for Gabriel Cotabiță's family, urging them to pray for a miracle or to trust in God. Then, after Gabriel Cotabiță woke up from the coma, the comments frequently included the terms “miracle” or the expression “God bless!”

There is even a person who declared that before the event he did not trust in God, but he tried to pray for Gabriel Cotabiță's recovery. When this thing happened and the artist woke up from the coma he was sure that God exists.

- tragic comments

There were people who were considering Gabriel Cotabiță was already dead, speaking about him in the past. The most relevant example is that of the user *George Cristescu* who was saying: “The mortal Gabriel Cotabiță was running. He was happy. He didn't think that in the next ten minutes will disappear from the living. From the moment he collapsed and went into coma he leaved us. How happy he was. He didn't suspect anything... It is talked about the other side. There is no other side...”

- comments that assign to Gabriel Cotabiță the status of God's will emissary

There were people who encouraged Gabriel Cotabiță to write a book about the experience he went through or to create a song about life and death. One user even placed Gabriel Cotabiță out of our world, considering him a symbol: „we are waiting for you back to our crazy world”

- comments regarding Gabriel Cotabiță's artistic value

These opinions were for and against Gabriel Cotabiță's artistic value. Some people said that the buzz created around this case is unjustified, due to

the fact that Gabriel is a mediocre singer. This encouraged other people to express their opinions in support of the singer. This topic even created conflicts between the users, being a proof that the audience was deeply involved in the subject.

Following the model proposed by mass-media, Gabriel Cotabiță's fans created a Facebook event (<https://www.facebook.com/events/767889796665708/>) called “*Ne.rugam.pentru.Gabriel.Cotabiță*” where 83 users attended. This people have expressed their opinions and thoughts about the artist. Within the group were posted several types of posts. The most people used religious expressions, making wishes of health to Gabriel Cotabiță: „I hope God will give him the power to pass well over all.”

The members of the group also posted prayers in which they demanded the Divine intervention for Gabriel Cotabiță's recovery. There were also posted sacred images alongside these religious formulas.

Other types of posts included constant updates on Gabriel Cotabiță's medical condition:

“Good news. Gabriel Cotabiță has opened his eyes and breathes on his own.”

Concomitant but also after the artist's recovery, the members of the group posted comments through witch they assign this healing to the providence:

“Our dear master is recovering. God is big! Thank you, God!”

In this group were also expressed pragmatic opinions which did not contained religious references, but had a positive tone:

“Gabi, I know you are a winner. Please, don't let me down. I will be your friend for life.”

When in media started to emerge terms or formulas typically religious and then calls to prayers, the audience felt obliged to actively involve in these rituals. In my opinion, the Facebook group named “**Ne.rugam.pentru.Gabriel.Cotabiță**” was created from some people's need of sharing their grief with others, in a public space. It is also known that in the Orthodox religion the prayers have a bigger power if they are practiced by a larger group of people in the same time. Considering that Gabriel Cotabiță is a public figure, known by the whole nation, the so-called mourning ritual could not have been done individually, in a private space due to the lack of a real relationship with the artist. Within the article posted in *The Information Society: An International Journal*, Jessa Lingel says that „A critical affordance of online grief is the ability to craft individual responses to

death in an open venue less constrained by still inchoate social and cultural obligations than a funeral home or cemetery.” (2013, p. 191)

Likewise, the comments posted by the audience on Gabriel Cotabiță’s Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Cotabițăgabriel/?fref=ts>) included in most cases the phrase „God bless!” and other wordings which explicitly expressed the hope for a Divine help.

Among the persons who have chosen to express their opinion on the artist’s official page were also more pragmatic persons which decided to communicate their best wishes to Gabriel Cotabiță, wishing him health.

There were also another type of expresses, originating from the people’s need to believe in miracles: “Jesus Christ has resurrected Lazarus from Nazareth in the Old Scriptures. Now Jesus Christ has again made a miracle, rising Gabi Cotabiță from the life’s whirlpool. Thanks to God.”

The audience’s perception was built according to the information received from the media and the way these information were presented. The audience identified the dramatic connotation given by the media channels to the subject and acted according to it. The sensitive, rich in negative words and metaphors formulas represented strong stimulus for the audience’s empathy and due to the fact that this topic was daily introduced in the news grid permitted this empathy to transform in pure emotion. The frequent exposure to this kind of message created a connection between the public and the topic. The overload with information determined the readers to think that they hold all the information about the situation Gabriel Cotabiță was in and to emotionally connect to all the things they have read.

According to Scott K. Radford and Peter H. Bloch “the public creates indirect relations with the celebrities to add a meaning and to consolidate the self-esteem and it seems that the appreciation of the public to a famous person can amplify in the moment of death. The end of such a relationship can lead to grief and to an intense sense of loss.” (apud McCutcheon, Rojek, 2012, p. 138)

The interest of the audience in this case is proved also by the fact Gabriel Cotabiță is in the top of the most searched personalities on Google in 2015. The publication Adevarul.ro sustains that: “The most searched personality on Google in 2015 is Simona Halep. She is followed by: Elena Udrea, Gabriel

Cotabiță, Vadim Tudor, Mihaela Radulescu, Oana Zavoranu, Marioara Zavoranu, Dacian Ciolos, Robbie Williams and Stephen Hawking.” (<https://goo.gl/F2TgR5>)

Scott K Radford and Peter H Bloch take over James and McCutcheon’s idea, saying that worship of the celebrities is not a new concept, but his importance is bigger now due to the fact that media presents every aspect of the celebrities’ life. (apud James, Mc Cutcheon, 2012, p. 139)

In the same article it is said that due to this fact, a lot of people feel like they have a real connection with the ones whose life is publicly exposed. The fans are devoted to their favourite celebrities and although they have never met, they feel like knowing them at a more intimate level. (ibidem)

I think this is also true for the way media approached Gabriel Cotabiță’s case. Initially, in the starting point of the event, due to the fact that Gabriel Cotabiță is a celebrity and the public was familiar with his artistic accomplishments, the readers have empathized with his suffering. A while after, by receiving constantly updates on the topic and finding out information about Gabriel Cotabiță’s condition, they became more emotionally involved. Thus, in the moment they were asked to pray and when they received the messages sent by media according to which only a miracle could save him, they have complied because this actions came after a period of time in which many emotions were accumulated. The individuals, fans or not of Gabriel Cotabiță, who have commented on the online articles have expressed their opinion as if they knew all the details of Gabriel Cotabiță’s life, so they felt entitled to judge him. This thing could have happened due to the fact that the celebrities’ life is publicly exposed and the secret details selected by media are deeply commented. This information that can or can not be real are presented as certain facts.

Obviously, the public has reacted as a result of the way it perceived the information from the media. Between media and the public was created a causal relation, each of these categories acting according to the interaction with the other one. Therefore, media has framed the case as a supernatural act as a result of the interest the public has shown to Gabriel Cotabiță’s case. Due to the way publications have chosen to present the event, readers have emotionally involved and created a wide religious manifestation.

## Conclusions

The hypothesis formulated by me in at the beginning was proved. Gabriel Cotabiță's case was frequently presented in media using the terms "miracle" and "wonder", being induced the idea that the healing happened with the help of the Divinity. Mass media was the main element involved in broadcasting this concept by presenting the case in occult terms, but also by publicly reproducing some religious-like statements. Intentionally or not, mass-media has built the public concept of "miracle" associated to the experience Gabriel Cotabiță had been through – firstly by over dramatizing the case, through the importance given to the subject and the wide media space offered to the story and then by introducing religious symbols within the published articles.

In the end, the explicit formulation of the word „miracle” or some suggestive phrases refer to the intervention of some supernatural forces.

The frames built by media were based on the concept of "victim". Media portrayed Gabriel Cotabiță as the victim of an unexpected event. The context in which the accident has produced was assigned to some factors out of the human control. However, I have observed that, even though media could have firstly assigned the salvation of Gabriel to the doctors, as it happens in similar cases (based on this kind of frames), it did not do this thing, but instead developed the story, adding depth to the status of „victim” through tragic narratives about the artist's medical condition.

When the public became involved enough in the subject, building the event's religious dimension through suggestive interpretations based on concepts taken from religion was possible.

In parallel, the victim frame was consolidated by introducing the relatives' declarations and by presenting the opinions of some celebrities considered to be very credible by the audience.

The "miracle" frame was gradually developed, starting from the "victim" concept. It was built on framing Gabriel Cotabiță as a victim and then was materialized by asking the audience to pray. The audience's emotional involvement led to the development of some wide religious manifestations, performed especially in the online medium. Gabriel Cotabiță's revival from coma was the climax, offering

to mass-media the possibility to explicitly use the "miracle" frame.

This frame determined a reaction from the audience. The public acted according to the frames and information received from media. Some of the people kept their pragmatism on account of the fact that there is a big suspicion on the actions done by celebrities or on the miraculous acts. Despite this, many of them relied on the Christian fundamental concept, believing and saying that the healing happened due to the Divinity.

The frames created by the public for this case were based on a different way of thinking than the journalists' and have developed in parallel with the ones created by the media. Initially, the public didn't reacted to the frame offered by the media to the character Gabriel Cotabiță – "the victim". A part of the audience (the individuals who have expressed their opinions on the articles I have analyzed) perceived Gabriel Cotabiță as the victim of his own mistakes, not of a situation out of his control. After this, more and more comments sustaining the frame built by the media have emerged in the public space – the audience was expressing its' regret regarding the unfortunate event.

During the event, simultaneous with the tragic presentation used in media, the audience has reacted, considering the situation as being out of the human control.

As the religious event have started to emerge in media, the comments of the audience have started to include more frequently religious terms. In the end, the artist's recovery and the statements made by him afterwards led to the multiple use of the word "miracle" and other expressions belonging to the supernatural field.

At the moment, Gabriel Cotabiță is seen by media and by the audience as the subject of a supernatural act. This thing is proven by the multiple articles describing him in religious terms, but also by the reactions of the celebrities which assign him divine abilities. Even now, two years after the event, Gabriel Cotabiță is perceived as a symbol of the Divine grace, but not necessarily as an emissary of God's will. I can not say that I have collected enough materials in support of this idea, to demonstrate the "evangelistic" status of the artist. His statement within the interview took by Simona Gherghe is not a consistent proof in support of this hypothesis. This is why I will only say that this potential could exist if the artist would do

efforts to transmit apostolic messages to a wide public. Until now, this potential has not been exploited. In order for Gabriel Cotabiță to become truly an emissary of God's will in the eyes of the audience, he should write a book or sustain conferences regarding the experience he has been through.

Regarding the way publications approached the topic, I have observed that it is not a notable difference between the frames used by Gândul, Adevărul, Evenimentul zilei, the publications I thought would present the theme in more realistic and impartial terms, on one hand, and Antena 1 and Libertatea which have demonstrated the fact that they exploit the sensational out of every situation, on the other hand. The only exception is represented by stirileprotv.ro which kept the same approach all the way through the event. They chose to stick to the impartial presentation of the information about Gabriel Cotabiță's medical condition, using medical terms and constructions meant to deny the dramatic elements presented by the other media institutions.

In conclusion, the effects of this event and of the miracle frame offered to the subject are felt even today. Gabriel Cotabiță's case has created a precedent in the mass religious rituals at a national level. Due to the broad manifestation that took place in order to heal the artist, media gained a valid reference frame to use when similar cases emerge in the public space. The most relevant and actual example is the one of "Denisa Manelista's". This singer had found out a while ago that she suffers from a terminal disease and this information, once emerged in the public space, became a media event. The media channels had included the subject in the news grid, reproducing the story in a similar way to Gabriel Cotabiță's case. The audience was encouraged to pray for Denisa "just like it did for Gabi Cotabiță".

This thing determines me to conclude that the experience the artist has passed through has indeed offered him the status of "symbol".

### Discussions

I think my research has revealed important aspects about the connection between media and religion. The subjects approached by media match the audience's interests. Due to the fact that religion is a crucial thing in every individual's life, the topics that have religion connotations are an infinite source of discussions for

everyone involved. My analysis has shown to a certain degree how the Romanian media system functions, but more than that, how the audience can influence the public space and how it can shape the behavior of mass-media. Although, the media has initially contoured a frame, the reactions of the public have determined the press institutions to built the certain frame of "miracle". Although, the general impression is that media functions in a one way direction, not taking into consideration the feedback of the audience, I believe that in this case, the process was both-sided, every part (media, on one hand and the audience, on the other hand) acting in result to the other part's actions. The "miracle" frame was built both by the media and the public.

Also, my research has shown how powerful the audience can be when it has an ideal, a thing to believe in. Excepting the pilgrimages, this kind of ritualistic manifestation is unique in Romania. My opinion is that Gabriel Cotabiță's case and this analysis can be used as a template for future researches. Also, I believe my research could be improved by analyzing a larger number of sources and by conducting interviews with the people involved in this case to discover the thinking process behind this ritualistic behavior.

The research can be expanded also to other subjects that carry religious connotations and have the power to divide the audience in two sides. My research could be developed in order to identify the differences between this case and other cases which carry religious connotations. I think it will be interesting to discover why other topics that include the terms "miracle" do not have the same impact on the public as Gabriel Cotabiță's case. In my opinion, this research would need a deeper look into the behavior of the audience and of media institutions.

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